

STATE OF ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF SENIOR SERVICES

RSA Tower Suite 350 201 Monroe Street P.O. Box 301851 Montgomery, AL 36130-1851



PHONE: (334) 242-5743 FAX: (334) 242-5594 www.alabamaageline.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Emily Marsal PHONE: 334-353-9394

EMAIL: <u>emilyt.marsal@adss.alabama.gov</u>

DATE: October 27, 2017

ADSS OFFERS FREE MEDICARE PLAN GUIDANCE DURING OPEN ENROLLMENT

MONTGOMERY - The Alabama Department of Senior Services (ADSS), along with the 13 Area Agencies on Aging (AAA), encourage Alabamians with Medicare to take the opportunity during the Medicare Open Enrollment (October 15 - December 7) to ensure their Medicare plan is still the right one for them. Alabama's State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) is a free service administered by ADSS and the AAAs and is available to give objective help to Medicare beneficiaries in order to make informed choices regarding their health insurance benefits during this often difficult process.

Each year Medicare insurance plans can change, and each year there is a period known as open enrollment, which is the time for Medicare recipients to review and modify their medical and prescription drug coverage.

At no cost, SHIP counselors can help guide Medicare beneficiaries and their caregivers during this time in a number of ways, including:

- understanding their current Medicare benefits
- determining which Medicare Prescription Drug Plan best suits their needs
- answering questions about Medigap, Medicare Advantage and other health insurance programs for seniors
- can assist in Medicare claims or appeals and other similar issues
- can refer beneficiaries to other services they may be eligible to receive

"The plans are constantly changing. I would recommend that Medicare beneficiaries check with SHIP to see what their plan will be covering in the next year and make sure it still fits their needs," explained Todd Cotton, Acting Commissioner of the Department of Senior Services.

"Without programs such as SHIP, our seniors could miss out on benefits and services that are vital to their overall health. This is essential, objective guidance from educated individuals and it's absolutely free," said Cotton.

State Health Insurance Program (SHIP) counselors and volunteers are currently holding free enrollment events across the State to help Alabamians select the Medicare plan that best fits their needs. For more information call your local Area Agency on Aging at 1-800-AGE-LINE (1-800-243-5463) to find an event near you or ask for a SHIP counselor for a FREE plan comparison and to learn if you qualify for additional services. You may also find a list of open enrollment events on www.alabamaageline.gov under "News/Events."